

Regulation should be brought into force. An Executive Council should be constituted to divest the Dewan of a part of his onerous responsibilities. The Legislative Council should have a non-official President.

194. Reform of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and other administrative reforms.

MR. N. MADHAVAN NAYAR (*Trivandrum taluk, Group II*) said that, among the measures introduced in the State during the last 40 years to advance the prosperity of the people, the establishment of representative institutions like the Municipal Councils, the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly was the most important. The achievements of the last-mentioned institution were manifold. Almost every important measure of public utility, whether it was the separation of the Revenue Department and Devaswoms, the Christian Succession Act, the Nair Regulation or the Ezhava Regulation, was first suggested and pressed upon the attention of Government by the representatives of the people in the Assembly. The Assembly was based on an executive order of Government. To enhance the extent of its usefulness, it was necessary that the Assembly should be reconstituted on a statutory basis with wider powers and privileges.

The representatives of the people had been requesting Government for nearly five years to reform and reconstitute the Assembly. Accordingly, a revised constitution was drafted during the time of Dewan Mr. Raghaviah. That draft constitution was severely criticised by the public. Government thereupon appointed a committee consisting of a few members of the Legislative Council to consider the draft constitution and report how the Assembly could be remodelled. The committee tendered its resignation shortly after, as the terms of reference were too narrow. Four years ago, a memorial signed by more than 90 per cent. of the members of the Assembly was presented to Government praying for the reconstitution of the Assembly and suggesting certain lines of reform. No orders were passed on the memorial. A representative committee should be appointed to draw up a reformed constitution for the Assembly.

The enormous growth in the work of administration had thrown an overwhelming volume of work on the head of the administration who could therefore spare neither time nor energy for the initiation of reforms. The Dewan's work should be reduced by the creation of an Executive Council responsible to the people.

The unemployment problem necessitated the revision of the educational policy of Government. The English and vernacular schools should be amalgamated and the Vernacular School Leaving Examination abolished. That would reduce the unemployment problem to some extent.

The Education Department should be placed under a Board or Council consisting of three or four members including non-officials. The work of the department had grown enormously in recent years.

The Development Departments should be amalgamated.

The delay in the execution of minor irrigation works by the P. W. Department resulted in untold hardships to the agriculturists. A separate Minor Irrigation Department should be organised.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Madhavan Nayar, I shall reply collectively to your representation on the Assembly and the administrative reforms after I have heard the other members who have to speak on the same subject. Besides these two, you referred to another matter to which I might say a word in reply. Your suggestions in regard to the reform of the system of education and the amalgamation of the Development Departments have been noted by the Government and will be made use of when occasion arises.

195. Reform of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly.

MR. KRISHNA PILLAI MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Karunagapalli taluk, Group D*) said that it was surprising that a member proposed to urge the abolition of the Assembly while there was a pronounced movement of opinion in favour of its rejuvenation and reform. The suggestions made from time to time in the Assembly helped Government to achieve great reforms for the people of the land.

The institution was based on an executive order of Government. It should be given statutory recognition.

The Assembly should be made more representative by lowering the franchise. The property qualification of voters should be lowered. The sex disqualification should be removed and all graduates should be enfranchised. Important representations should be discussed and voted upon in the Assembly. A representative of the Assembly should be nominated to the committees appointed by Government from time to time for other than legislative purposes. Representations should be replied to by the respective Heads of Departments.

A committee consisting of representatives of the Legislative Council and of the Assembly should be appointed for drafting a revised constitution on the above lines.

196. The necessity for discontinuing the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and for delegating its present functions along with other functions conducive to the development of self-government to Taluk Boards to be newly constituted on an elective basis under a wider franchise and composed of a non-official majority of three to one.

MR. V. CHANDY ITTY (*Kottayam taluk, Group D*) said that it was pure sentimentalism to preach the retention of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly which, however beneficial it might have been in the past, had outgrown its usefulness. The Legislative Council, as remodelled in 1907, had superseded the Assembly in constitutional importance. The case made out for the continuance of the Assembly was that it made possible some sort of personal contact between the Government and the governed. But that advantage was hardly commensurate with the worry involved.